

Housing Strategy 2009-2014

healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city
executive summary



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Published by

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About this Strategy

The Housing Strategy has been developed to address important citywide issues that affect the population of Brighton & Hove – both now and in the future.

This is a strategy for everyone living in Brighton & Hove. Housing has a fundamental effect on our lives and it is important that we identify those key housing needs that matter the most and take action that will make a real difference to local people and the city.

The Housing Strategy identifies the main housing issues for the city that the council and its partners are working to address. To consider specific priority areas, additional strategies have been produced on Homelessness, Supporting People and Temporary Accommodation.

Alongside this strategy we have also produced the city's first Older People's Housing Strategy and LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans) People's Housing Strategy to address the needs of particular communities in the city. A BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) People's Housing Strategy will be developed over 2010.

During the development of this strategy there has been a significant change in the state of the economy, housing market and people's needs as a result of the credit crisis and recession. This final version of the strategy has been updated since consultation on the draft strategy to ensure that it effectively reflects and addresses the challenges currently faced by local people.

Foreword

For many people our city is a wonderful place to live – we have a unique shopping district, restaurants that cater for all tastes, a few miles of seafront, the Downs on our doorstep and a vibrant night life.

However, for some their housing circumstances can make life a daily challenge – whether it's the high cost of housing, maintenance and repair issues, the need for support to remain independent or not having a home.

Unsuitable housing is recognised to affect other aspects of people's lives, harming education, health, employment and social networks. Through our strategy we want to help as many people as possible overcome their housing challenges to improve their wellbeing and overall quality of life.

Low cost home ownership will help many local families aspiring to get their feet on the property ladder and the development of new homes for rent will help those who find home ownership out of reach.

We want to help vulnerable home owners and people renting privately maintain and improve their homes, particularly ensuring they have efficient heating systems for the winter.

We also want to help support those people with learning disabilities, health and mobility problems to enable them to remain in their home as part of the community rather than see them have to move to more institutional types of care.

The new Housing & Regeneration Bill has allowed us to set up a Local Delivery Vehicle – Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes that will give us an opportunity to raise funds against a small proportion of the social housing stock.



Councillor Mary Mears
Leader of the Council & Chairman of the Strategic Housing Partnership



Councillor Maria Caulfield
Cabinet Member for Housing

This money can be used for a variety of purposes such as developing new affordable housing, providing more adaptations and most importantly, it can be used to bring tenants homes up to the Decent Homes Standard.

This work could also be a springboard for wider neighbourhood regeneration to help improve the quality of life in some of our most deprived neighbourhoods and help deliver excellence in our housing management services.

Over the life of this strategy we will help improve the lives of many people. However, we have to be realistic and accept that we can not help everyone. Through this strategy we will provide advice and assistance to those who may need a steer in the right direction and target our support at those who need it most.



Councillor Mary Mears
Leader of the Council
& Chairman of the
Strategic Housing Partnership



Councillor Maria Caulfield
Cabinet Member for Housing

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Our Strategic Housing Vision for Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove is a city with a quarter of a million residents living in 120,000 homes. For many people, Brighton & Hove is an attractive place to live providing a high quality of life.

Successful action in the city over the last few years to enable the development of new affordable housing, prevent homelessness, provide support, implement choice based lettings and improve housing quality in the private sector have helped to secure Brighton & Hove City Council as a lead authority, widely respected in working to address the needs of local people and the sub-region.

However, pressures from an expanding population, high property prices, pockets of poor quality housing and the effects of the recession are having a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of many residents, particularly amongst the most vulnerable members of our communities.

We recognise that the strategy will not be a success if carried out in isolation. It sits at the heart of the city's 2020 Community Strategy and shows how the Council and its partners are working together to address the region's housing pressures and also the needs and aspirations of the city. Ultimately, our Housing Strategy is aimed at:

Enabling healthy homes, healthy lives and a healthy city that reduces inequality and offers independence, choice and a high quality of life

The Housing Strategy is an overarching document that focuses and co-ordinates a number of other housing related strategies enabling us to maintain our momentum as we address the housing needs of the city into the next decade and providing a consistent drive towards our goals.

Our Strategic Priorities

The citywide housing strategy has 3 overall priorities that reflect the basic housing needs of the city:

- **Strategic Priority 1:** Improving housing supply
- **Strategic Priority 2:** Improving housing quality
- **Strategic Priority 3:** Improving housing support

Action to address these priorities will ensure we have enough of the right type of high quality housing in the city to meet the needs of local people and that those in need are provided with appropriate support to enable them to maintain their independence.

Making a Difference

Over the lifetime of this strategy we would like to achieve:

- An increase in the amount of housing available for low cost home ownership and affordable rent
- An increase the number of affordable family homes
- Essential repairs, improvements and energy efficiency measures to around 1,000 homes in the private sector every year
- An Accessible Housing Register of adapted and wheelchair homes
- A Local Delivery Vehicle that will raise funding to help improve the quality of council housing up to the Decent Homes Standard and regenerate deprived areas
- Excellence in our housing management services
- Support being provided to around 5,000 people every year to help them maintain their independence
- The first Extra Care housing scheme for people with disabilities

Our Strategic Principles

The Housing Strategy identifies and subscribes to 6 fundamental principles that underpin all of the work we do. These principles will make sure that our strategy goes beyond the traditional bricks and mortar focus of housing strategies to deliver real change:

- A healthy city
- Reducing inequality
- Improving neighbourhoods
- Accountability to local people
- Value for money
- Partnership working

Health Impact Assessment

We recognise that housing plays an important part of all aspects of people's lives, particularly health and well-being. As part of the development of this strategy, the Primary Care Trust has carried out a Health Impact Assessment. The results of this assessment are helping us to ensure that our strategy and action plans contribute to reducing inequality and improving the health and well-being of local people.

1.2 Engaging Local People

Effective engagement with local people and their representatives is at the heart of this strategy. The strategy has been developed in stages with extensive consultation with stakeholders to ensure that it meets the needs and aspirations of the city's residents.

As well as developing the new housing strategy we developed sub strategies to address important citywide issues that affect many residents. This has resulted in the city's first Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Trans People's Housing Strategy and Older People's Housing Strategy. A Black & Minority Ethnic People's Housing Strategy is also being developed.

Feedback from local people has illustrated how the city's high housing costs combined with lower wages can make daily life a struggle for many, particularly with the effects of the credit crunch and recession. High housing costs are making it difficult for households to take that first step on the property ladder and existing home owners are facing challenges in paying their mortgages.

Whilst the private rented sector provides a welcome and flexible housing choice for many people, shortages of affordable family sized homes are pushing some households into lower quality overcrowded accommodation. There is also a high demand and relatively low supply of affordable housing for rent through the council and housing associations with the lower costs and security of tenure only able to benefit small numbers of people.

Some of those with mobility or health issues are finding it difficult to remain independent at home, being in need of adaptations, suitable housing or some sort of support to remove the need for more institutional types of housing.

Strategy Consultation

The first round of consultation was undertaken over a period of 3 months in summer 2007 giving local residents and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on a Consultation Briefing Pack covering different aspects of housing and support. It was sent out to many stakeholders, voluntary organisations and residents and was available on the council website, libraries and other public places.

To make sure that we spoke to as many people as possible we held a Consultation Fair, officers went out into the community, attended social functions, service user groups, meetings and other events. Where possible we linked in with other research and consultation, such as the *Count Me In Too!* research looking at the needs and aspirations of the city's LGBT population.

The second round of consultation concentrated on the Strategy Framework – our proposed priorities and actions developed from the findings of first round of consultation.

Case Study: Council Housing Chairman's Focus Groups

In tandem with the strategy development process, a number of Chairman's Focus Groups have been considering key issues affecting the council's social housing stock and impacting on the lives of tenants. These groups are looking at a number of issues such as sheltered housing, adaptations and allocations which are also helping to inform our strategies and service provision.

A draft strategy was published in October 2008 with consultation running into 2009. The findings from were used to produce this strategy and help develop the action plan.

Sub groups of the Strategic Housing Partnership have been looking at the role of housing co-ops and issues around student housing. The findings of these groups helped inform our strategy.

We do not want consultation to end with the publication of this strategy, but would like it to be a part of an ongoing process, involving local people and other stakeholders throughout the life of this strategy, helping us to monitor its implementation and review our services.

Case Study: Housing & Support Working Groups

To support the development of the specialist strategies, an **Older People's Cross Sector Housing & Support Working Group** and a **LGBT People's Housing & Support Working Group** were set up. These groups are made up of representatives from a wide range of support and advocacy groups, the community and voluntary sector, the Primary Care Trust and the local authority. The working groups have reviewed each stage of the strategy development process and made many valuable contributions to our strategic priorities, action plan and equality impact assessment. We are working with stakeholders to explore the potential for a similar group to be a critical champion of the BME People's Housing Strategy.

1.3 The Goals of this Strategy

Each priority has a range of strategic goals that will be developed and implemented throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

Strategic Priority 1: Improving housing supply

To make sure that the city has the right type of housing to meet the needs of residents our strategic goals under this priority are to:

- Goal 1** Help households become homeowners
- Goal 2** Provide opportunities for households to move to larger homes or downsize as their needs change
- Goal 3** Identify opportunities to improve and develop deprived neighbourhoods
- Goal 4** Make best use of the housing stock
- Goal 5** Increase the supply of affordable rented housing

Strategic Priority 2: Improving housing quality

To make sure that residents are able to live in decent homes suitable for their needs, our strategic goals under this priority are to:

- Goal 6** Work with home owners and landlords to maintain and improve the quality of their housing
- Goal 7** Reduce fuel poverty and minimise CO₂ emissions
- Goal 8** Develop the Brighton & Hove Standard for high quality and well maintained council housing and improve tenants' homes to ensure that they meet the standard
- Goal 9** Work with owners to bring more of the city's long term empty homes back into use
- Goal 10** Ensure new housing is developed to the latest standards

Priority 3: Improving housing support

To make sure residents are supported to maintain and increase their independence, our strategic goals under this priority are to:

- Goal 11** Support households to make informed choices about their housing options
- Goal 12** Provide adaptations and support to households and their carers
- Goal 13** Work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Goal 14** Contribute to the wider city agendas of reducing worklessness, improving community cohesion, reducing anti-social behaviour and reducing inequality
- Goal 15** Work to ensure student housing provides a positive contribution to students' lives and the city

1.4 Local Area Agreement

The Brighton & Hove Local Area Agreement set out the priorities for the city and has been agreed between the Government, the local authority, the Local Strategic Partnership and other key partners.

The agreement contains 35 key performance indicators that the Government will use to assess how the city is performing and includes additional local indicators to reflect key issues. The city's key LAA housing indicators are:

- NI 141: Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living
- NI 154: Net additional homes provided
- NI 156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- NI 158: Percentage of decent council homes
- NI 187: Tackling fuel poverty
- Bring empty properties back into use
- Reduce the number of rough sleepers

As housing has such far reaching effects on people's lives, our strategy also contributes to a much wider range of national performance indicators than are in the LAA:

The priorities and goals of the Housing Strategy contribute to the following National Indicators for Local Authority Partnerships:

- **NI 1: Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area**
 - NI 2: Percent of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
 - **NI 4: Percent of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality**
 - NI 5: Overall/general satisfaction with local area
 - **NI 7: Environment for a thriving third sector**
 - **NI 17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour**
 - NI 21: Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
 - NI 23: Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity
 - NI 25: Satisfaction of different groups with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour
 - NI 27: Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
 - **NI 32: Repeat incidents of domestic violence**
 - **NI 119: Self reported measure of people's overall health & well being**
 - NI 125: Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care
 - NI 131: Delayed transfers of care from hospitals
 - NI 140: Fair treatment by local services
 - **NI 141: Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living**
 - NI 142: Vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
 - NI 143: Proportion of offenders under probation supervision in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence
 - NI 145: Proportion of adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
 - NI 147: Proportion of former care leavers aged 19 who are in suitable accommodation
 - NI 149: Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation
 - **NI 154: Net additional homes provided**
 - NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
 - **NI 156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation**
 - **NI 158: Percentage of decent council homes**
 - NI 159: Supply of ready to develop housing sites
 - NI 160: Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services
 - **NI 187: Tackling fuel poverty**
- (Indicators in bold are also included in Brighton & Hove's Local Area Agreement)

Strategy Map



Copies of our strategies are available from:

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